

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 2 as follows:

a₁ This application is related to co-pending application U.S. Serial No. 09/453,120, filed December 2, 1999, entitled WOUND CLOSURE DEVICES AND METHODS, now abandoned, hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 16 as follows:

a₂ Knot pusher 250 has a cylindrical body 252 and an end post [254] 253. Body 252 defines a first groove 254 and a second groove 256 on one surface, and a third groove 258 that is an extension of groove 256 on an opposite surface. Grooves 254 and 256 form an X pattern, and grooves 256 and 258 define a loop 260 extending around body 252. The three grooves differ in depth, with groove 256 being the shallowest and groove 258 being the deepest. Thus, when suture 10 is formed into an overhand knot and positioned within grooves 254, 256, and 258, the suture at crossing points 230a, 230b, and 230c does not touch. Once knot 230 is advanced against fixation member 18, knot pusher 250 is removed by pulling retrograde on the knot pusher. To aid in removal of knot pusher 250, a tube (not shown) can be advanced over knot pusher 250 between the knot pusher and the suture. As the tube is advanced past suture crossing point 230a, the suture is stripped from knot pusher 250.